(b) the target and implementation schedule for completion of the National Highway Project in the various sectors, Sector-wise;

(c) the reasons for their dismal performance; and

(d) whether Government would review the progress and expedite its completion and spell out a definite time-frame having regard to the importance of this infrastructure project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) National Highways Development Project (NHDP) Phase I mainly consists of Golden Quadrilateral. 92% of Golden Quadrilateral is likely to be completed by December, 2005.

NHDP Phase II mainly consists of North-South and East-West Corridors which are likely to be completed by 2008.

NHDP Phase III is targeted to be completed by December, 2009.

(c) There have been delays in some contracts due to problems associated with land acquisition, shifting of utilities, poor performance of contractors, environment and forest clearances, clearance of Railways for Road Over Bridges designs, law and order problems etc.

(d) The progress is reviewed periodically and corrective measures are taken to expedite completion and to meet the targets of the National Highways Development Project.

Collission of Ships at Visakhapatnam Port

1218. SHRI S.M. LALJAN BASHA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that two ships collided at Visakhapatnam Port, recently;

(b) to what extent has lax piloting and port management been the cause of such accidents;

(c) the number of such accidents that have taken place in the last two years at Visakhapatnam;

(d) whether any enquiry has been done by a competent authority on this accident; and

(e) the steps that would be taken to ensure that there are no such accidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The M.V. UTTAR KASI while shifting from outer harbour to inner harbour, collided with M.V. CHIN SHWE HAW berthed at return end of West Quay 1. The accident occurred because the M.V. UTTAR KASI ship engine staff did not carry out astern movement as required and instead carried out ahead movement the Inner Turning Basin of the harbour and the ship's Master, the ship's Duty officer and the port's pilot could not ascertain the same as the ship's RPM indicator in the wheel house was not working. The incident was not caused due to lax piloting or negligence of the port management.

(c) No other incident of collision have occurred during the last two years.

(d) Yes, Sir. An inquiry on the subject has been conducted by the Harbour Master of the Port.

(e) Ports follow precautionary measures necessary for safe movement of ships in the harbour area. The ships are moved by experienced pilots with assistance of tugs. In those cases where maneuvering appears risky, additional tugs/additional pilots are used for safe movement and vessels are moved only during daylight hours. The safety measures have now been further enhanced by the port authorities. The Master of the vessel will be required to ensure that the indication for engine RPM on the wheelhouse of a ship should be working. The port pilots have been instructed to suitably brief the Masters of the ships soon after boarding and before undertaking the pilotage operation.

Damaged National Highways in Gujarat

1219. SHRI RAJU PARMAR: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large number of National Highways, particularly in Gujarat have been damaged due to recent torrential rains and floods;

(b) if so, the details of National Highways damaged during the last three months; and

(c) the steps Government propose to take to repair these highways?